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RIDLEY-THOMAS CALLS FOR STRONG MEASURES TO CURB RACIALLY MOTIVATED VIOLENCE AT JUVENILE CAMPS AND HALLS

Los Angeles—Referring to an alarming number of violent outbursts in Juvenile facilities this year, Supervisor Ridley-Thomas has introduced a motion to curb conflicts among youth, much of which is reported to be racially motivated.

“We must address this disturbing problem of racial tension and violence in juvenile facilities now,” said Ridley-Thomas. “Not only do we have a responsibility to see that minors in our custody are placed in a safe and healthy environment, but we must make every effort to see that they are taught to develop healthy and positive relationships with youth of different races and ethnicities.”

A serious fight occurred between African American and Latino minors on September 5, 2010, at Camp Francis Scobee, one of the camps in the Challenger Memorial Youth Center in Lancaster. Another violent melee occurred on September 14, 2010, at the Barry J. Nidorf Juvenile Hall in the San Fernando Valley which also involved African American and Latino youth. According to Probation Department reports, there have been at least fifteen clashes between minors at Probation Camps this year, at least six of which involved clashes between African Americans and Latinos.

By his motion, Ridley-Thomas has called for detailed accounts of the recent disturbances, including gang affiliations of participants, as well as a report on the aftermath of the disturbances. The motion will also instruct the Probation and Sheriff’s

Departments to investigate any similarities between incidents at Camps and Halls as compared to those that may have occurred among prison gangs in jails run by the Sheriff's Department.

"I believe that we have an obligation to address these problems among our youth by teaching them constructive methods of resolving their disputes which will diminish the likelihood that they will resort to violence. Our investment of resources, education and positive values in them will benefit not only those who are currently in our Probation system, but will ultimately strengthen our entire community," said Ridley-Thomas.

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